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TESTIMONY

CONCERNING

That Worthy ELDER

ABRAHAM SHACKLETON,

Who departed this life at BALLITORE
the 24th of the 6th Month 1771.

Given forth by the Monthly-meeting
of *Carlow*, and approved by
the Quarterly-meeting for *Leinster*
Province held at *Mounsmelick*, the
26th of the second Month 1774.

*Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright:
for the end of that Man is Peace. Psal. xxxvii.
37.*

DUBLIN:

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in *Meath-street*. 1774.



A BRAHAM SHACKLETON born at *Harden*, in the Parish of *Bingley, Yorkshire* [England,] according to the best information, was the youngest child of *Richard* and *Sarah Shackleton* of that place. His Mother died when he was about six years of age; his Father when he was about eight.—Though deprived so early of Religious Parents, the impression made by their careful education of him was not in vain; he used often to commemorate the tender care and concern of his pious Father, how he followed him (his Son) when very young, to his bedside, and on leaving him to his repose, awfully recommended him to seek the Divine Blessing—And this Blessing did remarkably attend him during the course of his life. When very young, and exposed to manifold dangers in his education afterwards, this Blessing followed him, and by it's precious influence, led him aside from

from his companions, and in solitary places to seek the Lord, and to witness the operation of his hand.—In the time of advancing Youth, great were his Exercises and Conflicts, and many were his preservations divers ways; and thus by the dispensations of his Judgments and his Mercies, the Lord Almighty, who took him up in his Childhood, and nourished him by his precious visitations, formed and sanctified him for a Vessel of honour in his house.

Being arrived at Manhood, and having applied himself to Literature in order for a Livelihood, he was encouraged to remove from his native country into *Ireland*, where he undertook the tuition of the children of some Friends. This Migration and Employment he undertook in great Simplicity of heart and awful Fear; under which as he humbly kept, he was enabled to discharge his important Trust greatly to the satisfaction of his Employers; his instruction and
example

example tending much to improvement and edification.

In a few years after his leaving *England*, he returned and married *Margaret* the youngest child of *Richard Wilkinson* of *Knowlbank* in the Parish of *Burnsall, Yorkshire*, a valuable, religious young woman. And on his coming back to *Ireland*, they opened a publick Boarding-school for the education of Youth, at *Ballitere* in the County of *Kildare*. In this arduous and honourable occupation he laboured with conscientious pains and faithful industry for many years, as the Apostle says, *with Good-will, doing service as to the Lord, and not to Men.* The consequence of which assiduous attention, under the Sanction of the Divine Blessing, was an Increase of his Business and Reputation far beyond the Expectation of his humble heart: So that not only those of our own Society, but many people of considerable Quality in the world, of various denominations, placed

placed their children under his charge, several of whom fill conspicuous stations in life; and many retain not only a very grateful and affectionate Respect for the memory of their Preceptor, but Good-will and Regard for the Society on his account, remembering his extraordinary diligence and care in his Tuition and oversight of them; and also the living lesson of Uprightness, Temperance, Gravity and Humility, which he taught them by his Example.

In the course of time, while he was thus providing for his family, and endeavouring to discharge a conscience void of offence to God and man, he met with many Probations and Exercises of various kinds, and of very interesting nature, yet keeping on the bottom of Humility, and to the feeling sense of Divine and inward Support, he was born up through all, and grew from strength to strength in Religious Experience, and Capacity for Service in the Church

Church. For though he did not appear in the Character of a Minister amongst us, but rather as an Elder in the house of God, yet a dispensation of the Gospel was committed to him, and he was well qualified to minister of the same. Many times in our Religious Assemblies, in the Services of the Church, in the families of his Friends, and among his own household, under the fresh anointing of heavenly dew, his words would drop from him with such tender sweetness and living energy, as carried with them an evidence that they were brought up from the Well of Life and Salvation, ministering Grace and quickening Virtue to the hearers. Reverent, awful, solemn, and reaching to the thoughtful beholder was his frame and deportment in Religious Meetings; his humble spirit deeply and patiently waited, (sometimes watched and waited long) for the Resurrection of a Divine life. When this was present, he had all things

things, when it disappeared, all Comfort seemed withdrawn. And indeed, as he seemed beyond most men to take little satisfaction in any thing, but in the precious Truth itself, so we believe he was beyond most men favoured with the overshadowing of it. — Beloved, honoured and universally respected for his unblemished life, and useful labours, by all ranks and degrees of people who knew him, he was to the last preserved in deep humility and diffidence, still preferring others to himself, walking among his brethren with all lowliness and meekness, and exercising no authority in the church, but in the fresh sense and power of an endless life.

Edifying and instructive indeed were his words and conversation, but still more so his life and manners. With the Virtue of Humility he joined that of Temperance, of which he was an eminent Pattern. In meat, drink and sleep he was remarkably abstemious, and was earnestly solici-

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tous to enforce the practice of this Virtue, of which he gave so good example; being much concerned at the Excess which many professing with us had run into, particularly in the practice of continuing at the table to sit and drink after meals. This he looked upon as a depravity crept in among us, borrowed from the world, and tending to a dangerous Coalition with it, even to a union with it's Spirit, and conformity to it's customs in some of their most pernicious effects; beguiling from the Simplicity which is in the Truth, and indisposing the mind for those heavenly Refreshments and that sweet Communion, which our Ancients were wont to be made partakers of, in seasons which *they* devoted to Inward Retirement, not to Excess and Intemperance, neither to the use of many words, in which there wanteth not Sin. This Evil was his great burden, and against which he bore a faithful Testimony for several Years by Precept

cept and Example, being possessed with a Godly Jealousy lest their table should be made a Snare to many, and this Practice should lay waste the Inheritance of succeeding Generations in the Truth. And this weighty Testimony he not only had to bear against drinking to Excess, but he exceedingly disliked the use of many Bottles and Glasses at Friends Tables, as having the appearance of that Evil.—He was also much concerned at a Custom too prevalent among Friends, of uncovering the head upon entering into a Room, and was pained when he saw the youth or others in that practice, He used to say that when he was a young man he durst not balk his Testimony in this respect, though the Cross occasioned thereby seemed as bitter as death.

His Spirit indeed was sorely grieved for the depravity and declining state of the Society; he said that getting in and joining with the Spirit of
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the world, and not dwelling enough in the Littleness and Lowliness of mind, which becomes the followers of a crucified Saviour, was a great hurt to us, and he feared many were hastening back into *Babylon*.

Solid and exemplary in his own demeanour, he was very much grieved when he beheld too much levity of conduct and conversation in others, often saying, There was a Fear that would keep the heart clean; and expressed his ardent desires that his Successors might be a Generation to serve the God of his life in the land of his Pilgrimage.

By day and by night his travail in spirit was for the prosperity of *Sion*; he greatly loved to hear any thing good and commendable of his Fellow-creatures, and discouraged backbiting exceedingly, attending to and following the counsel of his great Master, who advised that we should in all things do to men, as we would that they should do to us. He delighted

lighted in retirement, and for that purpose frequently walked alone in the Fields: Even in company, the intense, interiour travail of his Soul was visible on his countenance, waiting diligently and patiently for the inward and Spiritual appearance of Christ, who, he often said, was the beloved of his Soul.—He often spoke of the necessity of our walking, as *Abraham* was commanded, before God, or in his presence, that so we might experience perfection; and often of endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

After a conscientious discharge of the duties of his laborious employment for many years (during which time he also laboured diligently in the Exercise of his Gift among Friends, and was cheerfully given up by his truly religious Help-meet to every Service in the Society which he was called to,) he found his Spirit in a greater degree sequestered from the cares of this life, and that he must
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be more devotedly separated to the help of the Church. Besides a constant, regular attendance of the particular and general Meetings to which he more immediately belonged, he paid frequent visits, in company with other Friends, to meetings in distant parts of this Nation; and several times attended the Yearly-meeting in *London*, even in the time of Old-age, and when natural Strength failed. Yet even then, his Zeal and spiritual Abilities witnessed no decay; but many are living Witnesses of the awful, reaching manner in which he used to rise and weightily express himself among his Brethren, in that great and solemn Assembly.

After the decease of his aged wife (who had been his beloved companion and faithful help-mate above forty years, and who departed this life in cheerful resignation, great Composure and sweet peace, in the eightieth year of her age,) he quitted house-keeping, and retired to live with a
Relation

Relation in the same village, who took a very affectionate care of him to the last.—While he resided in this new abode, he was visited with his last Illness, which he bore with great patience, saying that he was mercifully dealt with. During the continuance of his distemper, while it was any way suitable for him, he struggled to get out, to sit with Friends in their Religious Meetings, waiting therein for a renewal of Strength to his inward man, and when precluded by the progress of his disorder from the attendance of Meetings, he was visited in his own Apartment by many Friends, to whom he was often drawn forth in sweet counsel, to the tendering and melting down of their Spirits, under the influence of the precious Sense and Power which accompanied his words.—Many were the seasonable opportunities of this sort, and many the sensible, favourable expressions that dropt from him in the course of his painful, tedious Illness,

Illness, which reduced him to very great weakness of body. His Flesh indeed exceedingly decayed; but his Spirit was constantly renewed and replenished with heavenly oil; so that his Lamp burned with undiminished splendour to the very last; and in an holy confidence of an happy change, a little before his departure he said to his Relations about him, *I have no cause to grieve, neither would I have you:* Yet mentioned in true humility, that he had nothing to trust to, but the mercies of the Almighty. His mind was often favoured with inward joy; and one night, after much bodily pain, he was so filled with heavenly consolation that with a melodious voice he said, *I am well: I feel no pain: I feel good, Oh, the Elders! the Elders! they should dig for the arising of the well of Life, as with their staves in their hands. Spring up O Well and I will sing unto thee.* At another time, in a manner similar to this, he uttered these words, *Those*
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That are faithful to the end shall receive a Crown, a Crown that fadeth not away; but rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft. Indeed many were the beautiful and instructive sentences which he delivered, but not being then taken down cannot be exactly recollected; yet it is hoped the whole tenour of his watchful, circumspect life has impressed the minds of some of those who were witnesses of it with a veneration for, and aspiration after such a life, which will never be eradicated.

The night before his departure, a young man about whom he had several times been anxiously concerned being brought to his bed-side, though his speech faltered, and the powers of Nature failed; he spoke in a living, sensible manner, with the authority of Truth on his Spirit: And to one of his own family being present he addressed himself in a most affecting and encouraging exhortation as if taking a last and solemn farewell.

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The next morning, though his Speech grew worse, he spoke in a very tender and cordial manner to some of his family present: Some of the last articulate words he uttered, which could be understood, were expressive of the help and comfort which he felt; and even when the power of Speech failed, his manner and gesture were such, as those who were intimately acquainted with him knew he was wont to use, when his excellent Spirit felt the power of Truth in dominion.

He quietly departed this life in great peace, the same day, about noon, at the house of *Deborah Carleton*, in *Ballitore* aforesaid, 24th of 6th month, 1771: And after a very large and solemn Meeting, to which his Remains were brought, they were interred in Friends burying-ground, at said place, 27th of the same, Aged 74 Years.

F I N I S.

